

KNAPP NARROWS, MD.

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LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING,

WITH A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, REPORT ON  
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF KNAPP NARROWS, MD., WITH  
A VIEW TO SECURING A DEEPER CHANNEL BETWEEN TILGH-  
MAN ISLAND AND THE MAINLAND.

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JANUARY 19, 1916.—Referred to the Committee on Rivers and Harbors and ordered  
to be printed, with illustration.

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WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington, January 17, 1916.*

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a letter from the Chief  
of Engineers, United States Army, dated 14th instant, together with  
a copy of a report from Col. John Biddle, Corps of Engineers, dated  
October 29, 1915, with map, on preliminary examination of Knapp  
Narrows, Md., made by him in compliance with the provisions of  
the river and harbor act approved March 4, 1915.

Very respectfully,

LINDLEY M. GARRISON,  
*Secretary of War.*

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WAR DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,  
*Washington, January 14, 1916.*

From: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army.

To: The Secretary of War.

Subject: Preliminary examination of Knapp Narrows, Md.

1. There is submitted herewith, for transmission to Congress, report  
dated October 29, 1915, with map, by Col. John Biddle, Corps of



Engineers, on preliminary examination authorized by the river and harbor act approved March 4, 1915, of Knapp Narrows, Md., with a view to securing a deeper channel between Tilghman Island and the mainland.

2. Knapp Narrows is a waterway less than a mile long connecting Chesapeake Bay with Harris Creek, and separating Tilghman Island from the mainland. It is from 100 to 300 feet wide, and has a depth of from 1 to 2 feet at low tide, the mean tidal range being about 1 foot. Local interests ask that a channel 10 feet deep and 100 feet wide be provided through the narrows, and claim this improvement would shorten the distance to Harris Creek and points north of Tilghman Island, and afford a quicker and safer route for the oyster, fish, and crab industries of tributaries of the Choptank River. The waterway would be used chiefly by power boats of from 2 to 5 feet draft and freight boats of from 5 to 8 feet draft. It appears that the two steam boat companies operating between Baltimore and the points affected have stated that they are not now interested in the proposed improvement. The district officer finds that while a dredged channel through the narrows would require but little maintenance, the entrances would probably require constant maintenance with possibly a jetty, at least on the westerly side. He believes that the improvement would neither increase the amount of commerce of the locality nor reduce freight rates, and he expresses the opinion that the locality is not worthy of improvement by the United States. The division engineer concurs in this opinion.

3. This report has been referred, as required by law, to the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, and attention is invited to its report herewith, dated December 7, 1915, concurring in the views of the district officer and the division engineer.

4. After due consideration of the above-mentioned reports, concur in the views of the district officer, the division engineer, and the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, and therefore report that the improvement by the United States of Knapp Narrows, Md., with a view to securing a deeper channel between Tilghman Island and the mainland is not deemed advisable at the present time.

DAN C. KINGMAN,  
*Chief of Engineers, United States Army.*

## REPORT OF THE BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS.

[Third indorsement.]

BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS,  
December 7, 1915.

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY:

1. The following is in review of the district officer's report authorized by the river and harbor act of March 4, 1915, on preliminary examination of "Knapp Narrows, Md., with a view to securing a deeper channel between Tilghman Island and the mainland."

2. Knapp Narrows is a waterway connecting Chesapeake Bay and Harris Creek. It lies at the northern end of Tilghman Island, where it separates from the mainland. It is 300 feet wide except near the



middle, where it is 100 feet wide. The depth is 1 to 2 feet at low tide, and the mean tidal range is about 1 foot.

3. The improvement desired is a channel 10 feet deep and 100 feet wide through the narrows. It is claimed that considerable time would be saved to vessels between Baltimore and points north of Tilghman Island on Harris Creek, and that it would afford a quicker and safer route for the oyster, fish, and crab industry from the Choptank River, and a local anchorage in the narrows. Of the two boat lines operating between Baltimore and the above-mentioned points, both state that they are not interested. Another line understood to operate locally in connection with a line between Cambridge and Annapolis advocates the improvement on the ground that it would save at least an hour's run in the trip to Choptank River points. Other anchorage basins have recently been recommended at Ferry Cove, 3 miles to the north, and at Avalon, one-half mile to the south.

4. The narrows are used at present as a thoroughfare for light-draft boats only, as these are the only ones that can pass under the bridge situated at the middle of the waterway. The ends of the waterway are used as anchorage grounds for small craft. The district officer thinks that this improvement would neither increase the amount of commerce of the locality nor reduce the freight rates. He is of the opinion that, owing to the large cost of improvement and maintenance as compared with the commerce benefited, and the proximity of the other harbors recommended for improvement, Knapp Narrows is not worthy of improvement by the United States. The division engineer concurs in the views of the district officer.

5. Interested parties were informed of the unfavorable report of the district officer and given an opportunity of submitting statements and arguments to the board. Several communications have been received and given consideration.

6. From the information now available, it appears that while the improvement contemplated would be of considerable local convenience to a small community, it is not necessary for the benefit of general navigation; it would not result in any increase of commerce; and it would be expensive both in first cost and in subsequent maintenance. The board therefore concurs in the opinion of the district officer and the division engineer that it is not advisable for the United States to undertake the improvement of Knapp Narrows, Md.

7. In compliance with law, the board reports that there are no questions of terminal facilities, water power, or other related subjects which could be coordinated with the suggested improvement in such manner as to render the work advisable in the interests of commerce and navigation.

For the board:

W. M. BLACK,  
*Colonel, Corps of Engineers,*  
*Senior Member of the Board.*



## PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF KNAPP NARROWS, MD.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE,  
*Baltimore, Md., October 29, 1915.*

From: The District Engineer Officer.

To: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army  
(Through the Division Engineer).

Subject: Preliminary examination of Knapp Narrows, Md.

1. I have to submit the following report concerning a preliminary examination of "Knapp Narrows, Md., with a view to securing a deeper channel between Tilghman Island and the mainland," as called for by the river and harbor act of March 4, 1915, and as directed by letter from the Chief of Engineers of March 15, 1915.

2. Knapp Narrows is a waterway connecting Chesapeake Bay and Harris Creek about 15 miles northwesterly from Cambridge, Md. It lies at the northern end of Tilghman Island, which it separates from the mainland, is about 300 feet wide, excepting where contracted to about 100 feet at the pile bridge crossing it near the middle of its length. The depth is 1 to 2 feet at low tide and the mean tide about 1 foot. The pile bridge has a clearance of 3 to 4 feet at high tide over a span of 50 feet or so. This bridge is old and will be shortly replaced, when a drawbridge can be required if desirable.

3. This waterway lies between two localities for which anchorage basins have recently been recommended to Congress by the Chief of Engineers, viz, Ferry (or Haddaway) Cove on the westerly side of the narrows, 3 miles due north, 7 feet deep, and Tilghman Island Harbor at Avalon, on the easterly side, one-half mile due south, 8 feet deep (see H. Docs. No. 1142, 63d Cong., 2d sess., and No. 796, 63d Cong. 2d sess., respectively).

4. Local interests ask that a channel 10 feet deep and 100 feet wide be provided through the narrows, and claim that 12 miles would be saved to vessels between Baltimore and points north of Tilghman Island; that it would form itself a harbor, and also shorten distance to harbor in Harris Creek; would shorten mail route to and from Baltimore and Harris Creek landings by about 3 hours; and that it would afford a quicker and safer route for the oyster, fish and crab industries of tributaries from the Choptank River. They state that the waterway would be used chiefly by power boats of from 2 to 5 feet draft and freight boats of from 5 to 8 feet draft and estimate that the number of local boats using the waterway would be about 25 per day, and that from 100 to 125 transient boats would use it per month. Interested parties state that "this channel in past years was O. K. when used by light-draft boats carrying sail, but since the motor boats have taken the place of sail boats it is practically impassable only on high tides."

5. There are now two steamboat lines operating between Baltimore and the points above mentioned, one to Ferry Cove and points lower down the bay, and the other to Avalon (Tilghman Island Harbor) which also runs to various points on the Choptank River and tributaries. Both companies have been communicated with and have stated that they are not now interested in the proposed improvement. There is another line which is understood to operate gasoline-propelled feeders from points in Harris Creek, including Knapp Narrows.



to its main line between Cambridge and Annapolis, Md. A representative of this line has expressed a desire for a channel through the narrows on the ground that "it would have the effect of cutting off at least an hour in the run to Choptank River points, at the same time avoiding the bad shoals around Sharp's Island."

6. As far as can be determined no work of improvement has been done by the United States at Knapp Narrows, and no previous examination with that object in view has been made.

7. An inspection of the locality showed that the narrows and the two ends were used as anchorage ground for small craft, and the narrows used as a thoroughfare for light-draft boats that could pass under the bridge. It is believed that the claims as to the amount of its use if improved are well founded, and that it would be much used by small boats. The amount of commerce can not be stated.

8. The improvement would be by dredging through the narrows and out into arms of Chesapeake Bay at each end. The material seems fairly hard and it is probable that in the narrows there would be little maintenance necessary. At the entrances constant maintenance would probably be necessary, and possibly a jetty, at least on westerly side.

9. It is thought that a channel through the narrows would neither increase the amount of commerce of the locality nor reduce freight rates.

10. There are no questions of water-power development or land reclamation that could be considered in conjunction with an improvement of this waterway.

11. There is a good dock in the narrows adjacent to the bridge. It is in private ownership, but said to be open to all boats.

12. Owing to probable large cost of improvement and maintenance, as compared with commerce benefited, and the proximity of harbors recommended for improvement in the near vicinity, it is not thought that Knapp Narrows is now worthy of improvement by the United States.

13. No public hearing was held, as it was believed that all needed information had been obtained and that the facts stated in the various letters received fully cover the subject.

14. A sketch map of the locality, taken from a coast survey chart, accompanies this report.

JOHN BIDDLE,  
*Colonel, Corps of Engineers.*

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[First indorsement.]

OFFICE OF DIVISION ENGINEER, EASTERN DIVISION,  
*New York City, October 30, 1915.*

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS.

Concurring in the views and recommendation of the district engineer officer.

By direction and in the absence of Col. W. M. Black:

J. W. GRAY, *Chief Clerk.*

[For report of the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, see page 2.]







